

The OVH ARC Newsletter
OLE VIRGINIA HAMS™ AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.
Post Office Box 1255, Manassas, Va. 20108
OVH FM Repeaters - 146.970- & 224.660- & 442.200+ & 443.500+
OVH D-STAR Repeaters - W4OVH - 146.865- & 442.5125+
Web Site at <http://w4ovh.net>

OLE VIRGINIA TIMES

October 2014

Next Meeting: Monday, October 20, 2014

PRESIDENT'S LETTER:

Hello to all and I hope this message and this Newsletter finds you all healthy and well as we transition into Fall with leaves falling from the trees. This is a good time to check and secure your outdoor antennas before winter.

My last reminder for those who have not been paying good attention recently or who have not been able to make recent monthly meetings: the new meeting place for OVH's regular monthly meeting now is at the Manassas City Public Works building, 8500 Public Works Drive, Manassas, Virginia; there is plenty of parking in the evening; you should plan to enter at the (unmarked) side door on the long side of the building which faces the parking areas rather than the (marked) main entrance to the building. The regular monthly meetings begin at 7:30 pm on the third Monday of each month and will always end by 9:00 pm.

The Boy Scout's local JOTA event will take place this coming Saturday on October 18th beginning in the morning - details and who to contact for info later in this newsletter. OVH member: attend and use this opportunity to stimulate new interest in our great hobby.

Also, I want like to congratulate the two new OVH members who were voted in at last months meeting: Mary / KK4GOW and Ray / KM4CCI. Welcome to the club!

Time seems to be really flying by: Halloween is coming very shortly to be followed by Thanksgiving. At our upcoming OVH meeting I am sure there will be some discussion about the plans for the OVH's Christmas / Year End party which is usually around the middle of December. In the meanwhile, continue enjoying the remaining mild weather which we have enjoyed so far this Fall and I hope to see each of you at the upcoming meeting.



73 Justin KJ4LAS

Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

Post Office Box 1255
Manassas, Virginia 20108

OFFICERS

President:	Justin Anderle	KJ4LAS	571-221-3423
Vice Pres:	Clarence Meese	K4CNM	791-6424
Secretary:	Ron Zuber	N4RDZ	206-423-0602
Treasurer:	Terry Erlacher	KC4DV	571-292-1490

DIRECTORS

Don (Butch) Blasdel	W4HJL	369-2877
Arthur Whittum	W1CRO	791-4330
Charlie Dale	WA4YGI	361-3091
Bob Zaepfel	K4HJF	282-2451

WEEKLY FM REPEATER NET COORDINATOR

Thurs - 8:00 PM Local Time	JOHN / KG4NXT	257-3566
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HAMFEST 2014

Terry	KC4DV	571-292-1490
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FIELD DAY 2014

John	KG4NXT	257-3566
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CLUB ROSTER / DATABASE

Arthur	W1CRO	791-4330
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EDUCATION

Mark	WA4KFZ	818-8033
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CLUB EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

David Meola	KI4AZX	393-6681
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ARES - EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

David Lane	KG4GIY	703-628-3868
	email: KG4GIY@ARRL.NET	
Prince William County ARES website	http://pwcares.org	

FINANCE

Arthur	W1CRO	791-4330
Mark	WA4KFZ	818-8033
Terry	KC4DV	571-292-1490

GENERATORS

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
Keith	KM4AA	909-1512
Al	KB4BHB	368-4794

HISTORIAN

Theresa	KG4TVM	257-3566
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WEBMASTER — W4OVH.NET

Paul	W4ZB	754-0910
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EMAIL REFLECTOR — w4ovh@googlegroups.com

David Lane	KG4GIY	628-3868
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JOTA

Scott	KB8NUM	365-2642
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LEGAL

Bob	K4HJF	282-2451
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MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Luther	KJ4FDK	361-4885
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NEWSLETTER

Paul	W4ZB	754-0910
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NEWSLINE FOR THE WEEKLY NET

John H.	KG4NXT	257-3566
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PROGRAMS

Terry	KC4DV	571-292-1490
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QUARTERMASTER

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
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REPEATER CONTROLLERS

Keith	KM4AA	909-1512
Arthur	W1CRO	791-4330
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
David	KG4GIY	361-3042
George	K4GVT	791-5956
Russ	WB4HHN	368-6435

W4OVH / W4PVA — TRUSTEE

Keith	KM4AA	909-1512
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SCHOLARSHIP

Jim	W4JTP	392-0150
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SUNSHINE

Theresa (Acting)	KG4TVM	257-3566
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TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Keith	KM4AA	909-1512
Arthur	W1CRO	791-4330
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
Bill	N4SV	590-9562
Bob	K4HJF	335-1939
David	KG4GIY	628-3868

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The OVH ARC regular monthly meeting is at 7:30 p.m. every third Monday. In July, 2014, the monthly meeting will be held at the Central Community Library, 8601 Mathis Avenue, Manassas, Virginia. Members, prospective members and other interested persons are invited to attend. Local information can also be obtained through the OVH's FM repeaters on 146.970-, 224.660-, 442.200+ and 443.500+ MHz or D-Star repeaters on 146.865- and 442.5125+ MHz. Up to date information about OVH activities and its meetings is also available during the OVH's nets on its FM Repeaters each Thursday night at 8:00 p.m. or on 80 meters (3710 KHz) LSB each Sunday night at 7:00 p.m. (8:00 pm in Summer) or through the OVH's web site at <http://w4ovh.net>

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Sunshine Corner:

Happy birthday wishes to Terry / WA5NTI, Doc / W1IMX, Robert / KK4MXU, Simon / KB3QOA, Scott / KB8NUM, Ruth / KU4WH, Keith / KM4AA, Bob / KC4TNC and Phil / AC4PL.

JOTA – the Jamboree on the Air for the Boy Scouts will be October 17th through 19th this year. More information about it generally is available from the national Boy Scouts organization: <http://www.scouting.org/jota.aspx> The event for the local Boy Scouts in this area will be held at the Braemar Pool and Clubhouse on Iona Sound Drive, Bristow, Virginia on Saturday, October 18th. Set up of ham stations there will begin at 7:30 am and the actual event for the Boy Scouts will kick off at 9:00 am. Last year OVH members who participated had a great time and a large number of Boy Scouts and parents came out! If you can lend a hand great; if you can just stop by to observe or listen on the radio or talk to the Boy Scouts or their parents that will be great too; if you can't make it to Braemar, try to get on the air from home and answer a CQ. All participation will be appreciated. More info and who to contact appears later in this Newsletter.

The Club Spotlight column (later in this Newsletter) this month is about the Thursday Night VHF/UHF FM Net which starts at 8:00 pm local time each Thursday and the OVH members who serve as its Net Control Operators. Thanks to everyone for keeping that Net running smoothly. All OVH members (and non-member hams) are welcome to check in each week.

Congratulations to Lillian / KK4MXY on obtaining her Private Pilot certificate from the FAA in September after a very busy summer. Folks, Lillian is a senior at Battlefield High School, a very ambitious young lady. I hear she is also studying for her General license along with SAT's and applying to colleges for next year.

Hamfest Committee Planning Meetings for the 2015 Manassas Hamfest (to be held in June 2015) started in September and will occur each month; all members are welcome to attend. More information about those meetings will be on the OVH's (closed) email reflector each month or you can contact Terry / KC4DV.

If you have any news that you want reported here, contact me. Go Orioles! Happy Halloween!

73 Theresa KG4TVM email: kg4tvm@hotmail.com

Minutes of the Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club Meeting September 15, 2014:

Justin / KJ4LAS called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. The meeting was held at the Manassas Public Works Building conference room.

All present stated their names and call signs. There were 23 members and 4 guests present.

BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes from the August meeting were approved as read and amended, motion by John /KG4NXT and seconded by Terry / WA5NTI.

Treasurer's Report – Terry / KC4DV gave the report, motion by Arthur / W1CRO, seconded by Theresa / KG4TVM - report approved as presented.

Membership – Luther / KJ4FDK read in Ray Knight (no call yet). The

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membership also voted in Mary Moon / KK4GOW and Tim Rohr / KM4CCI, on motion by Luther / KJ4FDK, seconded by Theresa / KG4TVM, unanimously passed.

ARES – No Report this month.

Repeater – Keith / KM4AA the 150' of donated Heliastax is being stored by John / KG4NXT. Work needs to be done soon on the 440 Mhz repeater on the tower in Manassas.

Training – Mark / WA4KFZ – The upcoming Technician license class has been announced and will be starting on September 30th. While at the ARRL 100th Convention, Mark submitted several suggested changes for the VEC questions / answers after discussion with NVEC representatives.

Scholarship – Jim Parsons / W4JTP not present at the meeting but he will continue to be Chairman for 2015. Jim will be getting the packets out to the schools by March with a deadline to get them back in April. The Committee will make a selection by Mother's Day. Basically we are on track at this time. Motion by Art / W1CRO to give two \$1000 Scholarships this year was seconded by Bob / K4HJF. Motion Passed.

Hamfest – Terry / KC4DV reported that NOVA Labs declined the invitation to partner with the Hamfest this year but will participate like last year. Next meeting will be October 15th, meet for dinner at 6:00 pm and meeting will start at 7:00 pm. Watch the reflector for location. Everyone is welcome to meet for dinner at 6:00 pm and the meeting will start at 7:00 pm.

Field Day – John / KG4NXT requests a volunteer to take on OVH Field Day planning responsibilities for 2015. Second request. Contact John for more information.

Sunshine Corner – Theresa / KG4TVM wished everyone with a birthday in September (bunches) a happy birthday. JOTA will be at the Braemar Pool on October 18th. All are welcome to come and get young scouts excited about ham radio as a hobby.

Web Page – Paul / W4ZB reported that the pages are working well. Please submit any comments or suggestions for updates / changes via email.

4-H – Terry / WA5NTI advised that there is an interest in having a class for the students in the Buckhall 4H classes. 4H Club at Buckhall wants to set up a station in the fire hall. The EMTs and Medics want to learn how to use ham radio.

Old Business – Room reservations for use of the Manassas Public Works conference room have been made well into 2015, but these will need to be extended and renewed. We are fortunate to have use of this excellent facility and we should always be on best behavior while using it. The first person to arrive for each meeting will be buzzed in at the side door on the Public Works building; the door will then stay unlocked until the meeting is over.

Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) will be on October 26th. At last report the MCM still needs lots more people to assist. All hands meeting for HAMS will be on October 18th. The actual event starts very early, but also ends in the afternoon with lot of daylight remaining. Support a good cause!

October 8th–14th. Terry / KC4DV will be working as W1AW/4 on 80 meters in the general portion of the band. Go ahead and try! You might get a special contact for your logs.

New Business – Terry / WA5NTI suggested the club should establish a strategic plan that would set long and short term goals. Terry is willing to facilitate the process. Terry

Cont'd on next page

would like volunteers to work on the committee to develop the plan and map out the way forward. Terry will report back to the club at the next meeting with any costs and the way forward.

Terry / WA5NTI mentioned that there will be a new mobile van equipped with broadband ham net equipment. Please contact Terry for details of the van's tour schedule.

Terry / WA5NTI needs help with a engineering / analysis computer program known as "Radio Mobile." Mark / WA4KFZ is familiar with the program and offered to help, but anyone else is welcome to help as well. Contact Terry.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Butch / W4HJL and seconded by Al KB4BHB. All voted to approve. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Reminders about some upcoming events / calendar dates:

HAMFESTS:

October 26, 2014, Sunday - Mason-Dixon Hamfest, Westminster, Maryland, sponsored by the Carroll County Amateur Radio Club. more info at <http://www.qis.net/~k3pzn/hamfest.html>

UPCOMING VEC EXAM SESSION - OVH - November 3, 2014:

Nov. 3, 2014, Mon. at 7:00 pm. Although primarily intended for attendees at the Technician license class, this VEC session is open to the public, space available, for all FCC amateur radio exams. Contact Mark / WA4KFZ or John / WA4NXT for more details and/or to reserve a space for an exam.

SPECIAL LOCAL JOTA (BOY SCOUT HAM RADIO) EVENT

October 18, 2014, Saturday, setup begins at 7:30 am, operating begins at 9:00 am, location: 12300 Iona Sound Drive, Bristow, Virginia at the covered Pavillion. Equipment and antennas: whatever the individual operators bring and set up. There is 120V AC electric power at the Pavillion, and there will be a Carolina Windham as last year. The main organizer and coordinator for the local JOTA is Ken / KD6DBX email: carpenter.kendall@hq.dhs.gov Cellular: 571-228-2763. Last year, HF SSB and VHF FM were used as was Echolink when Internet connections could be obtained. At least the same modes will be used again this year. Individual callsigns are used, as there is no special event callsign. The OVH liaison is Scott / KB8NUM. For more information from the Boy Scouts of America organization: <http://www.scouting.org/JOTA.aspx> This will a fun event for the Boy Scouts as well as the others attending, plan or try to attend!

TRAINING / SEMINAR EVENTS:

Second Thursday evening each month, AMRAD meetings, McLean, Va. - see amrad.org for details.

OPERATING CONTESTS:

Information about many other operating contests almost every weekend and each month can be found on the WA7BNM's excellent web at <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal>

PUBLIC SERVICE / TRAINING / ARES EVENTS

Always check the online Calendar by David / KG4GIY at <http://www.pwcares.org> for the latest updates. David maintains a comprehensive calendar for upcoming events at that web site.

Complete direct contact information for David appears on page 2 of this Newsletter.

OVH's Thursday Night - VHF / UHF FM Repeater Nets

Every Thursday night (including on Holidays) at 8:00 pm, the mic is keyed up and a Net Control calls QST, QST, QST on the OVH's four VHF/UHF FM Repeaters; the repeaters are usually linked together for the Net. The sequence of the Net is strictly scripted and shortly after the Net starts an edited version of the Amateur Radio Newsline Report is aired for all to hear. Newsline is followed by a Net check in session; during the check in session, you can request technical help, share your personal ham experience or just say hello. The Net is also a great place to pick up information on upcoming OVH ham events. This Net is a good way to make sure the FM repeaters are working and for local hams to stay in touch with each other.

Our Net Control chairperson and Newsline editor is John / KG4NXT who assumed this role back in 2005. Currently helping out John / KG4NXT with Net Control duties are Al / KB4BHB, Clarence / K4CNM, Wayne / N7QLK, and Ron / N4RDZ. (See picture below.) Gavin / KK4MXT has served as Net Control from the PWC Fair for the last 2 years. John prepares a Net Control schedule for about 3 months in advance and then these guys pitch in and divide up the work to get the job done! The net is available on the FM repeaters: 146.970, 224.660, 442.200 and 443.500 MHz. Further details about these Nets appear on the OVH's web site at <http://w4ovh.net>

With over 100 members on the rolls and with usually 25-30 members (and guests) attending the OVH's monthly meetings, more members and guests are encouraged to join us on the Thursday evening Nets whenever they can. Most of the time, there are less than a dozen check-ins even though it is very easy to check-in with any almost any kind of VHF/UHF FM rig - HT, mobile, portable, or fixed. And after a time or two I think most will consider the Thursday evening Net a natural extension of our monthly meetings and the standing committee meetings held throughout the year. These Nets are just another way to enjoy and contribute to the fellowship of the Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club.

Current Net Control Operators for the OVH's Thursday Night - VHF / UHF FM Repeater Nets



L to R: Wayne / K7QLK, John / KG4NXT, Al / KB4BHB, Clarence / N4NCM and Ron / N4RDZ

LEARNING CW – MORSE CODE – PART II – OBTAINING OPERATING PROFICIENCY

Last month I explained how I got motivated to learn the Morse Code, and then learned it by practicing for 10 to 20 minutes each day with a “How to Learn Morse Code” course on a 33 rpm record and also using old QSTs to follow along with W1AW code practice transmissions received on a shortwave receiver. Back in the early 1960s, it was necessary to learn Morse Code to get each ham license because successful passing a Morse Code receiving and sending test was a prerequisite for taking the written test.

Although the FCC abolished the requirement of Morse Code proficiency for the initial ham radio license about 20 years ago (and later, for all ham licenses), some new hams since then still make the effort to learn and attain proficiency with Morse Code, a traditional part of the hobby and a mode which is still widely used on the HF bands. Is it difficult to learn? No! Is there anyone reading this who could not learn Morse Code well enough to make radio contacts using it? Probably not – but many reading will doubtlessly claim to have a mental block against learning anything like Morse Code despite having no difficulty whatever reading, interpreting traffic and road signs, touch typing, and similar activities which we all have learned with practice. How much effort is required to learn Morse Code on your own? About 25 to 50 hours, but unfortunately, the “muscle memory” which needs to be developed cannot be achieved in just a few intense continuous sessions; instead, a series of short (15 to 25 minute) sessions for learning and training must be spread out daily over a several weeks to a few months. Learning Morse code takes diligence and persistence but no particular intellectual skills, just repetitive practice in short sessions until proficiency is developed.

When self-learning, it is important how to learn first to copy (i.e., receive) Morse Code (“CW”) rather than how to send it. Two reasons: once you are able to copy CW, learning to send it with a hand key will be quite easy; and there is little point in being able to send CW when you cannot copy it. Although learning to copy first is important, some practice with sending, once you have learned all of the symbols (as dits and dahs), is also useful. For example, you can practice Morse Code by reading text to yourself and, as you read, saying out loud (or to yourself) the dits and dahs corresponding to the succession of letters, number and other symbols in the text. Doing that regularly will increase your “code speed” which will inevitably become faster and faster with more practice. Another good consideration about learning to copy Morse Code is that just about anyone learning Morse Code already can handwrite letters and symbols legibly at 20 to 30 wpm. As a result, legible handwriting speed is not a limiting factor when first learning to copy down received Morse Code symbols at a relatively slow speeds in the range of 5 to 15 wpm.

How does one go about learning to copy Morse Code today? Massive resources are now available online on the Internet covering most aspects. Google: Learning Morse Code to find them. A very good place to look is also: <http://www.arrl.org/learning-morse-code> The ARRL also continues to offer over the air code practice on the HF ham bands through W1AW and via downloadable MP3 audio files. Go to <http://arrl.org> and search for W1AW Code Practice for more information and details. That code practice is available almost every evening. The ARRL resources as well as the Google search results will also provide leads to several online CW learning sites as well as to downloadable CW teaching/learning/practice programs which you can install on your local computer. These programs installed on your own local computer can be very useful and helpful for learning. For example, many of them allow you to input arbitrary text and symbols which you prepare to the program which then generates Morse Code audio from the computer’s speaker from the text at a predetermined sending speed and character spacing which you can set and vary at will. This type of operation is particularly valuable for a learner because it allows you to follow and compare the Morse Code being sent and heard as audio tones generated by the computer with the actual text (e.g., from the text file) which you provided to the program – an excellent way to learn by creating custom text to help yourself improve with the letters, numbers and symbols which are giving you problems. Regular practice listening and attempting to copy received CW in a series of short sessions, day after day, is essential if you want to increase code speed. Of course, once you are able to copy CW in the 5 to 10 wpm range, you will want to begin listening to actual CW signals on the HF ham bands - which will really motivate you to continue to increase proficiency so you can join in on the fun!

Part III in the next month or two will address methods for sending CW, getting a CW station on the air, and some of advantages you will enjoy as a ham (and otherwise) if you make the effort to learn CW.

A Few Pictures Of Our New Meeting Room Taken At The September 2014 OVH Monthly Meeting



The OVH's new meeting place for its regular monthly meeting is in the main conference room in the Manassas Public Works Building.

Some Possibly Useful or Interesting Information

1. Software Defined Radio (“SDR”) Roundup. A recent edition of a ham radio Internet publication (published in English and in Dutch) has recently included a fairly comprehensive listing and discussion of a large number of SDR radio boards and projects which are available for purchase by SDR users and experimenters. The listing is quite comprehensive even though it does not include everything which is available. Go to <http://downloads.dkars.nl/DKARS%20magazine%20201409.pdf> to download the PDF file, and check out the article (in English) starting on page 26. This is a good resource for anyone interested in experimenting with SDR radios.
2. Lightning strike protection / mitigation systems. Hams with outdoor antennas always need to be concerned about grounding and lightning strike protection equipment and systems for antennas, towers and transmission lines. This is essential information both to protect the indoor radio equipment, but also to protect the house and its structures, including house electrical wiring, from damage, including fire, in the event of a close or direct lightning strike. Much of what has been written on about homemade lightning protection designs is questionable because direct (or close) lightning strikes occur infrequently in a given location, meaning there is little opportunity for a homebrewer to improve his / her approaches used based upon actual experience. Polyphaser provides one of the premier (but expensive) commercial lines of lightning protection equipment. It has now made available online about 40 white papers about lightning protection, including several specifically for ham stations at <http://www.smithspower.com/brands/polyphaser/services/media-library/white-papers?page=1>
3. Online calculators for solving RF problems. Engineering oriented hams are always interested in learning about new calculators to solve practical RF related problems. The web site for the RF accessory supplier, Pasternack.com, now includes a large assortment of online RF calculators. Check out: <http://www.pasternack.com/t-rf-microwave-calculators-and-conversions.aspx>